THE
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Missionary Magazine,
AND
REPOSITORY
OF
RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.
FOR AUGUST, 1803.

FROM THE EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

MEMOIR OF WILLIAM COWPER, Esq.

(Concluded from page 259.)

Mr. Cowper's relapse occured in 1773, in his forty-second year. His derangement so completely subverted those doctrinal sentiments which had afforded him, for the last nine years, the most transcendent comfort, that he considered himself as cast off for ever from the hope of mercy, although he never disputed the divine change which had been wrought in his mind. Through the depths of his distress, Mr. Newton attended him with unfailing tenderness of friendship, and once entertained him fourteen months at the vicarage; but he was deaf to consolation or encouragement, while he supposed the ear of his Creator to be shut against his complaints and requests. He ceased not only from attending public service, but likewise from joining in domestic worship, or attempting private devotion. His judgment was equally convinced as ever of the glory of Christ, and his desires for communion with God were as fervent; but apprehending his own perdition to be determined by an immutable decree, he regarded it as blasphemy in him to ask for mercy. His pious neighbours were struck with terror, as well as with compassion, at so awful a change. He was inaccessible to all, except Mr. Newton; but all, like him, longed to contribute to his relief. After the first dreadful

paroxysm of his disorder, although his unhappy persuasion remained unalterable, he was induced to admit some diversion of his mind from melancholy. Estranged from human society, he was inclined to domesticate a young leveret; and his neighbours instantly supplied him with three. The choice of their food, and the diversity of their disposition, amused his mind; and their occasional diseases called forth his tenderness. Two of them died; but the third was his companion throughout his abode at Olney. Seven years elapsed before he sufficiently recovered spirits to employ his mind in composition: to which he was urged by Mrs. Unwin, as the most effectual mode of relieving his thoughts from the dispair by which they were continually agitated. She suggested, as a subject, "The Progress of Error;" and the poem under that title, was the first fruits of his renewed applications. "Truth," as a pleasing contrast, became his next topic. "Expostulation" was formed upon the groundwork of a sermon repeated to him by Mr. Newton. "Hope, Charity, Conversation, and retirement," which were subjects either peculiarly familiar, or highly interesting to his mind, succeeded; and having determined upon publishinga volume, by the persuasion of his friends, he introduced it with a colloquial poem on popular subjects, and augmented it with a number of smaller pieces, written upon various occasions. The whole, except a few of the latter, were written during the winter of 1780.

At that period Mr. Cowper had the greater need of occupation for his mind, on account of the removal of his only familiar associate, Mr. Newton, from the curacy of Olney to the rectory of St. Mary Woolnoth, in London; where he superintended the publication of his friend's poems in the summer of 1781. Previously to his departure from the former place, he insisted on introducing to Mr. Cowper, his intimate acquaintance, Mr. Bull, of Newport, Pagnel, as his substitute in social converse. Mr. Cowper had always shrunk back from intercourse with strangers; and the gloom which still depresed his mind, rendered him, at that time, peculiarly reluctant to admit a new visitor. Mr. Newton, who dreaded to leave Mr. Cowper wholly destitute of a confidential friend, used, in this instance, an affectionate violence, which was attended with all the success he could hope for. The afflicted bard soon formed a strong attachment to Mr. Bull, whose extensive knowledge and natural vivacity

tended greatly to alleviate Mr. Cowper's habitual dejection. They regularly spent together one day evry fortnight: the only seasons, for five years, in which Mr. Cowper admitted any company, except during his friendship with the late Lady Austen, which commenced in September 1781. This lady, whose brilliancy of wit and uncommon talents in conversation, were admirably adapted to the relief of a mind like Mr. Cowper's, then resided with her sister, who was married to Mr. Jones, the clergyman of Clifton: a village about one mile from Olney. Mrs. Jones had long known and loved the gospel, and was intimate with Mrs. Unwin. Her sister had chiefly lived in France, during her union with Sir Robert Austen; after whose death she had again settled in England. She also had received the truth as it is in Christ, and had been useful to the enlightening of an endeared friend, who was married to a gentleman in France, named Billacoys. Their singular history is sketched in the Theological Miscellany for August 1787, under the names of Aspasia and Clara; and extracts from several letters of the latter, as well as a poetical epistle to her from Mr. Cowper, were published in the subsequent numbers of that Magazine, and in another, called "The Divine Treasury." Lady Austen, accompanying Mrs. Jones on a visit to Mrs. Unwin, Mr. Cowper, though with much hesitation, joined the party; and he shortly discovered, in Lady Austen's animated conversation, a powerful antidote to his melancholy. Their mutual visits soon became very frequent; and Lady Austen removing to the vicarage-house, then occupied by Mr. Scott, who had succeeded Mr. Newton at Olney, her intercourse with Mrs. Unwin and Mr. Cowper was made as easy and as constant as Mr. Newton's had been. She exerted her unequalled powers to rouse Mr. Cowper from dejection, which often seized his mind, even in company; and the first printed poem which he produced after the publication of his volume, the well-known ballad of John Gilpin, resulted from a story which she repeated for his diversion at such a crisis. Many short poetical effusions likewise were occasioned by their intimacy; among others, "The Rose," and several which are now first published. Mr. Bull also, in 1782, suggested employment for Mr. Cowper, which resulted in his beautiful translations from Madam Guion. In the following year he began, at the instance of Lady Austen, his grand work, "The Task;" which was

finished and committed to the press in 1784. Immediately on closing it, he wrote his "Tirocinium," with a desire to avert from the rising generation the evils he had experienced, or observed, at public schools. The connection of Lady Austen with him and Mrs. Unwin, was suddenly terminated about that period, by the apprehensions of the latter, that Lady Austen had formed an attachment to Mr. Cowper, inconsistent with the engagements which subsisted between herself and him. As these remained profoundly secret, Lady Austen might inadvertently afford ground for the suspicion; but she soon became aware of its consequences, by a farewell-letter from Mr. Cowper, whom she never afterwards met. Previously, however, to the cessation of their intercourse, she had suggested to him an undertaking that occupied the remainder of his life. Many of their social hours had been amused with literary information or entertainment. Among the numerous books which Mr. Cowper read, in the long evenings of winter, to his female friends, was Pope's elegant version of Homer. His own familiar and accurate knowledge of the original, prompted him frequently to complain of the translator's deviations from his author; and to express his wish, that some person, equal to the performance, would produce a more exact version. Lady Austen naturally urged him to undertake it; and he followed her advice after he had relinquished her company. He began to translate the Iliad in November 1784, immediately upon completing the Tirocinium.

The constant exercise of his mind in composition, so far succeeded to divert him from habitual despair, that he became more attached to society; and in the spring of 1785, he invited Mr. Greatheed to participate with Mr. Bull in their stated interviews. It was not, however, by arguing against his inveterate melancholy, that his religious friends could promote its relief. An allusion to the subject was usually productive of its symptoms; although, upon any other spiritual topic than that of his own prospect of futurity, Mr. Cowper would converse freely and profitably. The necessity, however, of avoiding so interesting a theme, could not but make an essential difference, both in his conversation and correspondence, from what either had been previous to his unhappy relapse. In writing to his friends, to whom he again became gradually habituated, as his poetical exercises advanced, he touches sparingly and cautiously

upon religion. He more freely indulges a vein of humour, which, contributed to the momentary dissipation of his gloom; while he could scarcely advert to spiritual subjects without approximating the source of his distress. This remark applies to most of his subsequent letters, as well as to the sportive sallies of his poetical writings. The flow of wit, which, in both instances, displays the peculiar powers of his mind, and fascinates the literary reader, was employed by him merely as a substitute for spiritual reflection, in which he esteemed it presumptuous to indulge himself, or as a forcible effort to resist the intrusion of distress and terror. The following passage, in a much later epistle to Mr. Hayley, affords a general key to his correspondence, from the time of its revival at Olney:—"*Non sum quod simulo*".—"I am not what I affect to be, my dearest brother. I seem cheerful upon paper sometimes, when I am absolutely the most dejected of all creaturss. Desirous, however, to gain something myself by my own letters, unprofitable as they may, and must be, to my friends, I keep melancholy out of them as much as I can, that I may, if possible, by assuming a less gloomy air, deceive myself, and, by feigning with a continuance, improve the fiction into reality." His habitual conversation was, as might be apprehended from this passage, very different from the style of his letters. It was serious, sensible, and affectionate; but usually dejected, and seldom brilliant. In his letters, as printed, there are many obvious chasms, which were most probably occupied with expressions of religious despondency.

His correspondence, and his sphere of society, was greatly enlarged, in consequence of the publication of his second volume of poems, which appeared in June 1785. The height to which it raised his reputation as an author, rouzed the attention of his polite relations; with whom, during his more depressed condition, his intercourse had been wholly suspended; and the hilarity of his lighter productions, encouraged them to renew their communications with the poet. In October that year, he received an affectionate letter from his cousin, Lady Hesketh, who, in the interval that had occurred, was deprived, by death of her husband, Sir Thomas Hesketh. The fortune he had left her, enabled her generously to offer Mr. Cowper any addition that might be desirable to his income. It could not

have been made more seasonably, as Mrs. Unwin's fortune, which was equally shared between them, had recently been much reduced. From a person whom Mr. Cowper had so highly esteemed from their days of childhood, he did not scruple to receive an obligation of this nature. In June 1786, after a separation of three-and-twenty years, these endeared relations met at Olney; when some apartments in the vicarage, which had been occupied by Lady Austen, were prepared for Lady Hesketh. In order, however, that, when she renewed her visits, they might compose but one family, Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin removed, in the following November, to a more commodious habitation in the pleasant village of Weston, a mile and a half distant from Olney. Mr. (now Sir John) Throckmorton and his lady, to whom the house, and most of the parish belonged, had, in the preceding summer, cultivated the acquaintance of Mr. Cowper; and they neglected no means of rendering their vicinity to him agreeable and useful. This accession of local comforts was very shortly embittered by the premature decease of Mrs. Unwin's only son, whose friendship with Mr. Cowper had subsisted and increased from their first interview at Huntingdon. Soon afterwards, Mr. Rose, a gentleman of London, passing near Weston, introduced himself to Mr. Cowper, although he was then peculiarly difficult of access, his habitual dejection having been aggravated by the loss of Mr. Unwin. Mr. Rose's zeal surmounted every obstacle; and the ardour of his attachment to the author of the Task, excited in him a reciprocal friendship, which was fostered by frequent correspondence, the active services of Mr. Rose at London, and his occasional visits at Weston.

Mr. Cowper's spirits did not recover their usual tone till Sept. 1787, when he resumed his application to Homer. A great majority among his acquaintance and his readers, earnestly wished him rather to have been employed in original composition; and some of his intimate friends were, moreover, apprehensive that the vast extent of his undertaking might prove detrimental to his health and comfort. A short letter to his constant and affectionate correspondent J. Hill, Esq. in November the same year, satisfactorily explains his reasons for perseverance in the work he had begun. "Assure yourself," says he, "of one thing, that though to a bye-stander it may seem an occupation surpass-

ing the powers of a constitution never very athletic, and at present not a little the worse for wear, I can invent for myself no employment that does not exhaust my spirits more. I have even found those plaything avocations, which one may execute almost without any attention, fatigue me, and wear me away, while such as engage me much, and attack me closely, are rather serviceable to me than otherwise." He frequently, nevertheless, composed short pieces to gratify his friends, and to record domestic incidents, that interested his feelings. At the request of some advocates of justice and humanity, he wrote about this time some popular Lyrics against the detestable Slave-Trade; and he obliged the inhabitants of Northampton with several copies of verses for bills of mortality; but his attention to his great undertaking was so little remitted, that he completed the first sketch of his translation of the Iliad in September 1788, and finished the seventeenth book of the Odyssey in the following May. He derived great help, in transcribing, from his zealous friends; the number of whom was increased, about that time, by the important accession of his young kinsman, Mr. Johnson, of Norfolk, who repeatedly spent some time at Weston, in the intervals of his studies at Cambridge. For him, Mr. Cowper entertained a truly paternal regard; and it was requited by a degree of affection too seldom manifested by a son to his own father. Mr. Cowper's intercourse with others of his maternal kindred, was also thus renewed; and he was indebted to it for the highly acceptible present of her picture. A good resemblance of it is engraved in Mr. Hayley's work. In September 1790, Mr. Johnson had the satisfaction of transmitting to the book-seller, a corrected copy of the whole translation of Homer. After it had undergone a fresh revisal, while passing through the press, it was published in July the following year. Having prosecuted this laborious occupation, though closely, yet with a moderation that admitted of needful exercise and relaxation, he accomplished it, in the possession of his health and spirits, at least equal to what he had enjoyed at its commencement.

His religious state during this period, was no otherwise likely to be improved than as the diversion of his thoughts from despair tended to relieve his constitutional malady. The nature of his employments were such, as would probably have been, in some measure, detrimental to any per-

son capable of religious enjoyment. It is much to be regretted, that his correspondence with Mr. Newton, by which alone the real state of his mind was likely to be unfolded, is yet involved in impenetrable secrecy; and still more, that it probably will never be communicated to the religious world. It is only known, from Mr. Greatheed's sermon, that Mr. Cowper was not destitute, at times, of glimmering hope and dawning consolation; and that he repeatedly resumed his intercourse with the throne of divine grace: but these seasons were, unhappily, too transient to admit of his renewed attendance on public worship, or of his attainment to a confident reliance on the infallible promises of the gospel. Yet, as these delightful intervals occurred during the time that he was most fully occupied with poetical labours, it does not appear that they proved at all inimical to his spiritual recovery. Nor is it certain that an equal time spent in original composition, would have afforded him a similar relief: especially, if of so laborious a nature as he had experienced "The Task" to be, to his intellectual powers. The repeated solicitations of his friends induced him, notwithstanding, as soon as his Homer was completed, to direct his thoughts toward a third volume of poems. Occasional pieces, of which several have been published in successive editions of his former volumes, and others, are interspersed by Mr. Hayley in his biographical narrative, had already accumulated: and he designed to introduce them with a larger work, somewhat resembling his Task, the subject of which, the "Four Ages" of man's life, was suggested to him by Mr. Buchanan, a neighbouring clergyman of classical taste and character. His attention, nevertheless, was soon diverted from this object, by a proposal from his book-seller to publish a splendid edition of Milton's poetical works; in which the Latin and Italian Poems were to be translated, and Notes on the whole to be subjoined by Mr. Cowper. Both these projects were frustrated by unexpected events; but a prose translation which had been executed by him, while correcting his Homer, was published in 1792, by Mr. Newton, at whose request it had been undertaken. It consists of six letters, written in Latin by the late Mr. Vanlier, a minister of the gospel in the dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. They are descriptive of his conversion from scepticism to the love of Christ, which was exceedingly remarkable in most of its circumstances.

Soon after Mr. Cowper had entered upon his translation from Milton, his spirits received a severer shock than they had experienced since the death of Mr. Unwin. The mother of that beloved friend, who, as he expresses himself on the occasion, had been his own "faithful and affectionate nurse for many years," was attacked, in December 1790, with a disorder which afterwards proved to be paralytic. It was not at first attended with permanent effects; and her apparent recovery afforded him speedy relief. In the following March, Mr. Cowper's acquaintance with Mr. Hayley commenced, by a friendly letter and sonnet which he received from that gentleman, in consequence of his proposed work on Milton. Mr. Hayley having engaged his services to another book-seller for a similar purpose, kindly offered to Mr. Cowper the use of some scarce books, with which Milton had been conversant; and intreated him to visit his rural retreat in Sussex, that they might confer upon their respective performances. Mr. Cowper declined an invitation to go so far from home; but pressed Mr. Hayley to visit him at Weston; and they met there about the middle of May. The gratification afforded to Mr. Cowper by the company of his benevolent poetical brother, was unexpectedly dashed, by a new and alarming attack of Mrs. Unwin's disorder. Mr. Greatheed, having been invited to meet Mr. Hayley at Weston, was alone with her, waiting for their return from a walk, when she was suddenly deprived of the use of her limbs, her speech, and faculties, in a very distressing degree. The discovery threw Mr. Cowper at first into a paroxysm of desperation; but the tender sympathy of his literary associate, and the apparent benefit derived from medicinal exertions for Mrs. Unwin's relief, in some measure recruted his spirits. She gradually, but imperfectly recovered her powers; and Mr. Cowper laid aside all other occupations, that he might incessantly attend to her help and comfort. Mr. Hayley being obliged, after a fortnight's stay, to return home, Mr. Cowper's neighbouring friends attempted to supply the want of his services at Weston. At the commencement of August, Mrs. Unwin had sufficiently regained her strength to accompany Mr. Cowper and Mr. Johnson to Mr. Hayley's elegant house at Eartham; his solicitations, and the hope of benefit from the journey, and a change of scenes, having prompted them to the enterprize. They were absent from home, for the first time

in twenty-six years, about seven weeks: and this extraordinary exertion, if not productive of effects so beneficial as were wished, yet was attended with none of the evils that might have been apprehended from its novelty. On the road, at Kingston, Mr. Cowper had an interview, both in going and returning, with General Spencer Cowper, son of a younger brother of the poet's father, with whom he had frequently corresponded since the publication of the Task.

After his return to Weston, Mr. Cowper attempted to proceed with his commentary on Milton; but it proved a severer labour to him than his poetical compositions had been; and the continual attention required by the decline of Mrs. Unwin's strength and faculties, disabled him for application, and gradually distressed his spirits. He at length suspended his exertions on Milton, and limited them to a revisal of his Homer for a second edition; on which he employed several hours every morning, before Mrs. Unwin was able to quit her chamber. The rest of each day was uniformly devoted to her consolation. Thus was spent the whole of 1793; and at the commencement of the following year, he sunk into a depth of melancholy, as desperate, though not equally violent, as that which he endured when first deprived of religious comfort. His cousin Lady Hesketh, who had usually spent a part of the year at Weston, made it her constant residence, solely for his preservation and relief; which Mrs. Unwin, having been reduced to second childhood, through her encreasing infirmities, was no longer capable of promoting. Mr. Hayley, who had revisited Weston the preceding year, repaired thither in April 1794, to unite his efforts with those of Mr. Cowper's afflicted friends, for his solace and restoration;—but all were fruitless. It appeared extremely desirable that he should be removed to the house of Dr. Willis, at Greatford in Lincolnshire, in order to reap the utmost advantages of medical assistance; but he could not be prevailed upon to accompany Lady Hesketh thither; and a journey which she undertook, attended by Mr. Greatheed, to obtain the doctor's advice, and a visit which the latter made, in consequence, to Mr. Cowper, proved wholly unsuccessful.

It may easily be supposed, that in such circumstances, the expences of the family at Weston were greatly enhanced. Mr. Hayley's friendly exertions had not been limited to objects of social or literary intercourse. He had zealously and pa-

thetically applied to persons in power, with whom either Mr. Cowper or himself had formerly been connected, to obtain such an honourable mark of regard to his friend's literary merits, as might secure him from pecuniary embarrassment under accumulated burdens. In his last visit at Weston, he had the pleasure to receive from Earl Spencer (who was distantly related to Mr. Cowper, and had always testified the highest esteem of him) his Majesty's grant to the latter of a pension which Dr. Johnson and Mr. Gibbon had successively enjoyed. It was nominally 300l per annum; but nearly one third was swallowed up by customary fees of office. Though it could not have been bestowed more seasonable for Mr. Cowper's exigencies, his state of mind was such as not to admit of his learning the acquisition. Mr. Hayley was under the necessity of relinquishing his ineffectual attempts at consolation; but Lady Hesketh endured so severe a trial till July 1795 when her health could no longer sustain its effects. Mr. Johnson, who had taken orders two years before, had repeatedly quitted his parochial charge at Dereham, to share with her so oppressive a burden; but he could not further prolong his absence without impropriety. In such circumstances, no alternative remained but to transport his afflicted kinsman, with his equally comfortless and helpless companion, from the scene which they were no longer able to enjoy, to one where he could watch over the remnant of their lives. He conducted so difficult an enterprize, with a skill dictated by exquisite tenderness, and with a success that exceeded every hope. Mr. Cowper, who had trembled at the thoughts of passing his own threshold, not only supporting, but even, in some degree enjoying so long a journey; and Mrs. Unwin, who had been supposed incapable of a removal, sustaining it without the slightest detriment. Their subsequent situations were carefully accommodated to their wants and their inclinations; but Mr. Cowper seldom discovered any degree of sensibility, except regret for his banishment from the beloved scenes of Weston. His mind admitted of no other relief, than from being gorged with books of fictitious narrative; and his affectionate kinsman submitted to the painful drudgery of incessantly reading them to him. It was with far different feelings that he found him become willing to attend daily in Mrs. Unwin's room while a portion of scripture was read to her. At the close of 1796 she obtained a relief from earthly sufferings; and happily, Mr. Cowper no longer possessed those acute sensations, which

would have rendered the event insupportable to him. She expired with perfect tranquility: he saw her half an hour before she drew her last breath, and again some hours afterwards; and thenceforth never mentioned her name!

He had been incited to resume, for a few weeks of the preceding summer, his revision of Homer, which was far advanced before his last relapse. He did not again take up the work till September, in the following year. He then persevered till its completion, which was effected in March, 1799. He had, since leaving Weston, written only three or four letters, all expressive of his misery, to some of his intimate friends; and when visited by the Dowager Lady Spencer, Sir John Throckmorton, and Mr. Rose, he declined conversing with them. The only compositions to which he could afterwards be excited, were some translations into English of short Latin and Greek poems, and of two of Gay's Fables into Latin verse; beside two original poems, one called "The Cast-away," describing an event recorded in Anson's Voyage, in allusion to his own hopeless condition; the other which he composed in Latin, on the appearance of some ice-islands in the German Sea, and translated into English, to gratify Miss Pesoune, a female friend of Mr. Johnson, whose compassionate attention to the poet's last years, equalled that of Mrs. Unwin and Lady Hesketh. He had written two lines only of a Latin version of another of Gay's Fables, when, at the close of January, 1800, he was seized with dropsical symptoms; and on the 25th of April he expired, in the manner related in his funeral sermon. To that publication, and to the extracts given in our Review of it we must refer our readers for a more particular account of Mr. Cowper's religious experience, having already greatly exceeded our usual limits. To them who desire a fuller opportunity of contemplating his literary excellence, the faithful and judicious account which Mr. Hayley has supplied, will be highly acceptable. Beside its narrative, epistolary, and critical departments, his two volumes comprise above a hundred poetical pieces by Mr. Cowper, original or translated, most of which have never before been published. The author's translations from Milton are reserved, in order to be published, together with Mr. Hayley's labour on that poet, in a superb edition of Milton's works, of which the profits will be devoted to the erection of a public monument, in memory of Mr. Cowper.

FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

ON DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

REVEREND SIR,

YESTERDAY I heard you preach on the doctrine of divine sovereignty. Generally I hear you with pleasure, but such discourses give me pain: they seem to represent God as the tyrant rather than the father of his great family. It would gratify me very much if you would give me your thoughts on the subject in a *free and familiar* style, without the pathos and awful solemnity of the pulpit, and perhaps profit

Your affectionate Parishoner,

DECIUS.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE this moment received a line from you, desiring "a free and familiar" attention to the doctrines of divine sovereignty. I thank you: it is my happiness, as well as duty, to serve my affectionate people.

Whether God governs the world in the best manner has always been doubted by a part of mankind. Some persons have constantly suggested that he was "a hard master." He as uniformly has insisted that he did "no wrong;" that his conduct was "just" and "equal." Indeed there are so many mysterious events, that *knowledge* and *faith* are necessary to quiet our apprehensions; yet without satisfaction respecting the divine conduct there cannot be permanent peace of mind.

That God governs the world seems to be granted; whether he governs in a sovereign manner is doubted by many. But while they oppose it do they understand what sovereignty is? If any one govern according to his own judgment, his own wishes and pleasure, so far the government is sovereign. Whether God governs according to his own judgment, or the judgment of some other; can any reflecting mind entertain a single doubt? Does he not say, and do we not all believe him, "I will do all my pleasure?" This is proper and right, because it is a wise administration. "Shall any teach God knowledge?" "O, the depth both of the wisdom

and knowledge of God!" Therefore he is styled "God only wise," or God who alone is wise. The wisdom of other beings is folly compared with his. He charges the angels with folly. And who, my friend, should govern—God, who alone has wisdom, or men or angels? And if he govern, shall it be in a sovereign manner, according to his own mind, or according to the wishes of men, or of angels charged with folly? Will not all wise men choose the sovereign administration of God, because it is infinitely wise?

The goodness of God is an equal argument for his sovereign authority. He is "abundant in goodness." No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly. He does "good to all." How abundant is his goodness to angels, to saints in glory, to all the works of his hand!

Will not every good being choose to have the universe and himself directed by infinite goodness? Is there one saint or angel of goodness, but will cheerfully subscribe to this? If any being beside God direct or influence events, it must be a being *less good* than God, therefore the direction will be less perfect.

It is also well for us that God governs the world in a sovereign manner, because he alone is infinitely *merciful*. "The Lord is *merciful* and slow to anger." "The Lord is *gracious*." He waits that he may *be gracious*. He shows mercy not only to those now willing to receive it, but waits, and waits on those who repel his offers, that he may do them good hereafter. This ought to endear his sovereign administration to a guilty world; especially when they read of "the *riches* of his grace," and that he is "the God of *all grace*." He spoke in mercy to trembling Adam. Of the first gospel sermon God was the preacher, paradise the temple, and our first parents the hearers. He has been showing his mercy in every age, to the present moment. Thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand are now drinking rivers of mercy in the world above. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name."

Can you, my dear sir, oppose the *merciful* sovereignty of God? We are all under condemnation; God is under no obligation to save any one of the human race. We have no claim. It is wonderful to angels that any soul can be saved. It is just that all should be destroyed. It is not partiality, but mere benevolence, sovereign mercy, that

some are made heirs of glory. Permit me also to say, I think the sovereignty of God *necessary*. It is unavoidable in the nature of things. If there be a world, it must be governed; if it be governed, it must be by God; if it be governed by God, he must govern in a sovereign manner; for no one else is able to govern it himself; no one is able to direct him how to govern it. Who can "teach God knowledge?" can sinners, can saints, can angels? There is therefore not only a *necessity* that God should govern, but that he should govern as a sovereign, or according to the counsel of his own will.

You will therefore, my friend, I hope, spontaneously reflect that all you enjoy is owing to the favour of God. You do not direct events. You have not carved your present portion. You cannot make a hair white or black; you cannot make a brother live. By the sovereign grace of God you are what you are. I hope you will also be impressed, by the remarks I have made, with the unreasonableness and wickedness of objecting against the decrees of God. If God governs according to his own mind, or in a sovereign manner, he must certainly *determine how* he will govern. It would be unreasonable to expect a farmer or mechanic to labour in their callings without determining in what manner, without allowing them design and plan in their business. If God brings creatures into existence, he must determine what kind if creatures. If he bring men into existence, be must determine when, and where, and what their characters shall be, else all will be random and chance. If God saves a part of mankind, he must determine *how*, whether by the death of his son, and the instrumentality of the gospel, or by some other means. If he saves men, he must determine how many and whom. He must choose them before the foundation of the world; he must write their very names in the book of life. He must have mercy on whom he will have mercy. To object against the doctrine of divine determination is to object against the *sovereign* authority of Jehovah; it is to object against all authority of God. Such an objection if allowed to operate would tear the Almighty from the throne of the universe as effectually as atheism itself.

The propriety and necessity of divine sovereignty ought to render us thankful to God for governing the world, for governing us. Instead of murmurs and complaints, the-

voice of praise should burst from every tongue. We ought to bless God for disposing things in a wise, good and merciful manner, because it is not only right but necessary. Accordingly Nebuchadnezzar, from the field of banishment, did "bless and honour him whose dominion is an everlasting dominion." Job in the furnace of misery spoke in the same style.

To conclude, my friend, the doctrine of divine sovereignty should make us and the world happy. A dreadful portion of the distress in this world, and of the torments in hell, rises from opposition to this doctrine. It is a happy article of our creed, when it obtains a cordial belief. If the world viewed it as they ought, it would excite confidence and joy. It would render them strong in divine consolation while weak in strength. Nothing is more calculated to sooth, support and ravish the heart, than this doctrine. If infinite, sovereign goodness, wisdom and mercy rule the world, we may all feel safe and happy. Deploring our own ignorance and errors, the thought that sovereign wisdom reigns, is like good news from a far country. Amazed and overwhelmed with the evils of the world, a view of infinite goodness on the throne is like the morn of liberty to the chained captive. Agonizing with a sense of guilt, faith in divine mercy is like the dawning of heaven to the departing saint.

Adopt then, my dear friend, the language of holy men, and say, "I will extol thee, my God, O King, forever and ever." Adopt the language of heaven, and in the sincere joy of your heart say, "unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be glory forever and ever;" and "Amen" subscribes

Your affectionate Minister,

EUSEBIUS.

FROM THE LONDON EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

QUERIES AND OBSERVATIONS
ON THE PERMISSION OF SIN.

Is it to be supposed, that the first and chief Being is bound to do all he possibly can to prevent the existence of evil both natural and moral?

If so,—then, since evil does exist, we must suppose, either that he was not almighty, or not infinitely wise and so could not have prevented its existence; or else, that through a defect of goodness he forbore to exert himself to prevent its existence, when he was well able to have hindered it from taking place.

Yea, if it be supposed that the Supreme Being is absolutely bound to prevent the existence of moral evil, then (unless we admit that it may have taken place altogether against his will) there can be no such thing as moral government: for, by the supposition, no being can be under law but the Supreme Being; forasmuch as, it is supposed, that, ~~if any being does amiss, it must be his fault to let him do it.~~

But, if the Supreme Being be not bound to prevent the existence of evil, then surely it is infinitely better for him to regulate, and set exact limits to the whole business, than for it to be under no controul, or to be under the controul of inferior beings.

Let me appeal to any intelligent being who has the least confidence in the wisdom and goodness of the Most High, —Since you find evil does exist, what supposition would afford you the most satisfaction?

That it exists altogether against the will of God, through his not having power or wisdom sufficient to prevent it? and that now it does exist, he can only do his best to check and restrain, and at length to conquer it; in which he will, it is hoped, succeed at last?

Or, that it exists by his wise permission, and under his absolute controul, and will, contrary to its own natural tendency, and to the intention and design of all sinners, eventually be made subservient to the divine glory in all things.

If it be no blemish in the divine character to permit sin, then it was no blemish in the divine character to purpose or intend to permit it*. If all that God does is right, it could not be wrong to resolve to do so; God could not intend doing well too soon.

If God does permit sin, and decreed to permit it, no doubt he had wise and good ends in so doing: and as he has wonderfully united his interest, not only with the interest of his obedient creatures, who never fell, but also with the interest of the redeemed from among men,—we may conclude, that the plan which he has actually chosen to adopt, shall

* See Edward's Remarks on Important Theol. Controversies, p. 147.

not only promote his own glory more than any other which could possibly have been chosen; but shall also, on the whole promote creature-happiness more than any other suppesable method of regulating the universe.

Some, however, seem strangely shocked at this! as if they could be better satisfied if we would admit that God had chosen a worse plan than he might have chosen, than they can be with our supposing that he has chosen the best! Their feelings are to me incomprehensible.

God has chosen to conduct the universe according to the plan which actually is executing.—This they admit.

The plan God has adopted is the wisest and the best: it will advance his glory more than any other; it will produce a greater sum of happiness than any other.—At this they marvel, and are shocked!

I also marvel at them! and can go no further.

FROM THE LONDON EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

EVANGELICAL TRUTH

THE GRAND OBJECT OF ANGELICAL RESEARCH.

A MEDITATION ON 1 PETER 1. 12.

Which things the Angels desire to look into.

It is a truth, allowed by all Christians, that the dispensation under which we live, affords us far greater advantages for spirituality and heavenly enjoyment, than any other which preceded it. To us, life and immortality are brought to light. The spirit that properly belongs to it, is not a spirit of bondage, but of adoption; crying, *abba*, father. The happiness attainable under it, approaches near to that of the heavenly world; so near does its land border, as it were, upon it, that believers, in the present state, are said to be "Come to mount Sion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of the just made perfect," &c. Yet it is no less true, that the greater part of professing Christians live as though they stood upon no such ground, and possessed no such opportunities. We possess an Old Testament spirit amidst New Testament advantages. A promise is left us of

entering into rest; but we *seem*, at least, to come short of it. How is this? Is it not owing, in a great degree, to the *neglect of the gospel?* Having assented to a system of doctrines, we fancy we know almost the whole that is to be known upon this subject, and have nothing more to do but to hold them fast against the errors of the times, and take heed that we do not dishonour them by an inconsistency of conduct. Hence, what is called Religious Conversation, seldom turns upon the gospel, unless any part of it be called in question; but either upon our own want of spirituality, or the pleasure that we have formerly experienced; or, perhaps, upon the talents of this or that popular preacher.

When a company of Christians meet together, and feel a wish for improving conversation, let one of them take a Bible and read; and, as he reads, let him frequently pause, and let any one that can, make a remark, or ask a serious question, so as, upon the whole, to promote the understanding of what is read. This would draw off the attention from less profitable things; and the blessing of the Lord attending it, would, ere we are aware, produce those holy pleasures which, while pouring over our own barrenness, we shall sigh after in vain.

To comfort the primitive Christians, who, as well as we, were "in heaviness, through manifold temptations," Peter took no other course than to declare unto them the glorious truths of the gospel, and the vast advantages which they had over all others of former ages, in possessing the knowledge of them. Three things in particular he holds up to their consideration:—1. That the prophets were to us ministering servants; "Not unto themselves, but to us they did minister things which are now reported." They sowed, that we might reap.—2. That the things which they foretold, and which we possess, were the objects of their most intense research. "Of which salvation, the prophets have enquired and searched diligently; searching what, and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."—3. That such is the excellence and glory of the gospel, as not only to be the study of prophets, but of angels: "Which things the angels desire to look into."

It is generally supposed, I believe, that the phrase *look into*, alludes to the cherubims which were placed bending

over the Mercy-seat, and looking, as it were, with intenseness at it. Thus Mary stooped, and looked into the sepulchre, in hope of discovering her Lord; and thus believers are described as *looking into* the perfect law of liberty, or the gospel of Christ.

In former ages, the angels employed their capacious powers on other themes. At first, the display of the divine perfections in creation, furnished them with matter for praise and gladness. "The morning-stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy." Afterwards, the providence of God, in the government of the world, enlarged their mental boundary. "One cryed to another, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory!" But since the coming of the Son of God in our nature, and the laying down of his life, they appear to have been so engaged in this subject, as to be comparatively indifferent to every other. In other works of God, they had seen sometimes one perfection glorified, and sometimes another; but here all unite their beams, and form one general blaze. These are the things, therefore, which now "they desire to look into."

The powers of angels are far superior to those of men. Their means of instruction also, and long experience of divine things, must render them far more capable of understanding the gospel than we. Yet with all their advantages and discoveries, such is the fulness of the subject, that they are at an infinite distance from comprehending it: all that is said of them is, that they "desire to look into it."

Angels were doubtless acquainted with the general design of salvation, from its first discovery to man; but the particular way in which it should be accomplished, appears to have been, in a great measure, hidden from them. It was a way so much above what any creature would have expected, that though there were hints of it under the Old Testament, and some very plain intimations, yet it was far from being clearly comprehended. The prophets, as we have seen, did not fully understand their own prophecies; but diligently searched into the meaning of them:—neither did the apostles, with all their advantages, prior to the event:—neither did evil angels, with all their subtilty; for if Satan had known that, from the death of Christ, his cause would receive so deadly a wound, it is scarcely conceivable that he would have stirred up Judas and the Jewish rulers to

accomplish it. He appears to have entertained a kind of forlorn hope, that by getting him put to death in the most ignominious form, and by the only religious nation upon earth, he should be able to stamp everlasting infamy upon his name, and that all after-generations would be ashamed to own him. The disappointment and unexpected shock that he and his adherents met with on this occasion, seems plainly intimated by our Saviour's having "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them on his cross:" and though the holy angels might be supposed to understand much more than fallen ones,—yet were they not equal to this subject till events made it manifest. Hence it is said, "from the beginning of the world, to have been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers it might be known by the church; that is, by the redemption of the church, the manifold wisdom of God." When the event transpired, therefore, it was like a flood of light bursting forth upon them. The resurrection of Christ filled all Heaven with transport. Hence, perhaps, we may account for the question of the angel to Mary, "Woman, why weepest thou?" *q. d.* "Did you but know all, you would not weep! It is not yours to weep now, but your adversaries!"

The cross of Christ, instead of issuing in disgrace, is followed with glory. His friends learned to glory in it; yea, and to glory in nothing else: and well they might. It was glorious to see the powers of darkness stripped naked, as it were, to their shame;—to see Satan foiled by the woman's seed, and his schemes exposed to the derision of the universe;—to see him taken in his own net, and falling into the pit that himself had digged. It was glorious to contemplate the numerous and important bearings of this one great event! By this, the divine displeasure against sin is manifested in stronger language than if the world had been made a sacrifice:—by this, a way is opened for the consistent exercise of mercy to the chief of sinners:—by a believing view of this, peace arises in the mind, and, at the same, purity in the heart:—for this he is crowned with glory and honour in the Heavens, principalities and powers being made subject to him. This is the only hope of a lost world, the only medium of acceptance with God, and the only admissible plea in our approaches before him. This it is that

will put every grace in exercise in this world, and impart all the happiness in that to come, of which created minds are susceptible.

These are a few of the bearings of the doctrine of the cross. Is it any wonder that angels should desire to look into it? Rather, is it not matter of wonder and shame that we who are more immediately interested in it than they, should be so far behind? How is it that we should be the last to bring back the King, who are his bone and his flesh? Our Redeemer took not upon him the nature of angels: yet they love him, and the gospel of salvation by him; and wherefore? They love God, and therefore rejoice in every thing that glorfies him in the highest:—they love men, and therefore rejoice in that which brings peace on earth, and goodwill to them:—they rejoice in every instance of the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, and in being themselves made subject to him. Had we but their love with our interest, we should not only emulate, but exceed their highest praise. While they, in innumerable myriads, were saying, with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," we should not only say, "Amen," but add, "Thou art worthy: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed *us* to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation!" GAIUS.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.

REMARKS ON A PASSAGE FROM THE SPECTATOR.

On looking the other day into the first volume of the Spectator, I met with the following passage—"A little before our club-time, last night, we were walking together in Somerset Garden, where Will Honeycomb had picked up a small pebble of so odd a make that he said he would present it to a friend of his, an eminent virtuoso. After we had walked some time, I made a full stop, with my face towards the west, which Will knowing to be my usual method of asking what's o'clock in an afternoon, immediately pulled out his watch, and told me we had seven minutes good. We took a turn or two more, when, to my great surprise, I

saw him squir away his watch a considerable way into the Thames, and with great sedateness in his looks, put up the pebble he had before found in his fob."

After indulging a hearty laugh at the ludicrous circumstance with which the foregoing narrative concludes, I began to consider seriously, whether the mistake of this absent man might not be paralleled by what is done every day by a great part of mankind. A little reflection supplied me with many instances of an affirmative solution of my query; to every Christian observer of the transactions of the world they will readily occur.

When, for instance, men confine all their care to their bodies, and abandon their souls to destruction—when they grasp, with trembling eagerness, the treasures of this world, but carelessly suffer those of a better to slip for ever from their hands—when they toil to obtain the applauses of mortals, like themselves, but disdainfully reject that "honour which cometh from God"—when they impatiently pursue the gratifications of sensual luxury, but forego all the solid and lasting pleasures of religion—when (in short) men hold fast the trifles of time, but prodigally relinquish the inestimable blessings of eternity—what do they but emulate, or rather surpass the folly, without possessing the excuse of him who, while he pocketted a pebble, threw his watch away!

PANEGYRIC ON MILTON AND COWPER.

Mr. Hayley, in his life of Cowper, quotes the following observations from an anonymous letter writer; "whose justness of sentiment and expression," says the *Christian Observer*, "in this instance, claim commendation, and prove him worthy to be the panegyrist of the bard whose merits he so well knows how to relish and describe."

Having enumerated the requisites for producing the noblest benefits and delights of poetry, he says,

"I believe it will be readily granted, that all these qualities were never more perfectly combined than in the poetry of Milton: and I think too there will be little doubt, that the next to him in every one of these instances beyond all comparison is Cowper. The genius of the latter did certainly not lead him to emulate the songs of the seraphim: but

though he pursues a lower walk of poetry than his great master, he appears no less the inraptured votary of pure unmixed goodness. Nay, perhaps, he may, in this respect possess some peculiar excellencies, which may make him seem more the bard of Christianity. That divine religion infinitely exalts, but it also deeply humbles the mind it inspires. It gives majesty to the thoughts, but it impresses meekness on the manners, and diffuses tenderness through the feelings. It combines sensibility with fortitude, the lowliness of the child with the magnanimity of the hero.

" The grandest features of the Christian character were never more gloriously exemplified than in that spirit, which animates the whole of Milton's poetry. His own Michael does not impress us with the idea of a purer, or more awful, virtue than that which we feel in every portion of his majestic verse; and he no less happily indicates the source from which his excellence was derived, by the bright beams which he ever and anon reflects upon us from the sacred scriptures: but the milder graces of the Gospel are certainly less apparent. What we behold is so awful, it might almost have inspired a wish, that a spirit equally pure and heavenly, might be raised to illustrate, with like felicity the more attractive and gentler influences of our divine religion. In Cowper, above any poet that ever lived, would such a wish seem to be fulfilled. In his charming effusions, we have the same spotless purity, the same elevated devotion, the same vital exercise of every noble and exalted quality of the mind, the same devotedness to the scriptures, and to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel; the difference is, that instead of an almost repressive dignity, we have the sweetest familiarity; instead of the majestic grandeur of the Old Testament, we have the winning graces of the New; instead of those thunders, by which angels were discomfited, we have, as it were, " the still small voice" of him, who was meek and lowly of heart.

" May we not then venture to assert, that from that spirit of devoted piety, which has rendered both these great men liable to the charge of religious enthusiasm, but which in truth raised the minds of both to a kind of happy residence

' In regions mild, of calm, and serene air,
' Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
' Which men call earth.'

A peculiar character has been derived to the poetry of them both, which distinguishes their compositions from those of almost all the world besides. I have already enumerated some of the superior advantages of a truly virtuous poet, and presumed to state, that these are realised in an unexampled degree in Milton and Cowper. That they both owed this moral eminence to their vivid sense of religion will, I conceive, need no demonstration, except what will arise to every reader of taste and feeling on examining their works. It will here, I think, be seen at once, that that sublimity of conception, that delicacy of virtuous feeling, that majestic independence of mind, that quick relish for all the beauties of nature at once so pure, and so exquisite, which we find ever occurring in them both, could not have existed in the same unrivalled degree, if their devotion had been less intense, and of course their minds more dissipated amongst low and distracting objects."

COWPER'S TASK.

AN EXTRACT.

THE praise of superior excellence has already been awarded, by the public voice, to the author of the TASK—a poem of such infinite variety, that it seems to include every subject, and every style, without any dissonance or disorder; and to have flowed without effort from inspired philanthropy, eager to impress upon the hearts of all readers whatever may lead them most happily to the full enjoyment of human life, and to the final attainment of heaven. This poem is perhaps the most attractive that was ever produced, and such as required the rare assemblage of truly poetical powers for its production.—

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Religious Intelligence.

FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

The following Sketch, although in part but an abstract of communications already given to the public, may, nevertheless, be neither unacceptable nor useless.

It is a fact, as melancholy as it is notorious, that notwithstanding the long period, which has elapsed since the benevolent Redeemer made his appearance in flesh, a small part of the globe is yet blessed with the light and the benign influence of the gospel. Of the eight hundred millions of human inhabitants which the earth is computed to contain; only about fifty millions are on the Protestant Christain list. Five hundred millions are enveloped in pagan darkness; and the remaining two hundred and fifty millions are principally Mahometans, Jews and Papists. What a melancholy picture of the moral state of the world! and how deeply affecting to every friend of God, and of his fellow men! But is it to be regarded only as a subject for lamentation and unavailing tears? Can any one contemplate it a moment, and not be stricken with the reflection, that something ought to be done; that some vigorous exertions ought to be made, to extend the blessings of Christianity, and thus to meliorate the condition of the world?

For many ages, those, who have been favoured with the gospel, have been strangely negligent and supine, in regard to this great object. Engaged in controversy among themselves, or suffering their attention to be engrossed by the concerns of this temporary state, they have been criminally forgetful of the millions of their brethren, who have been perishing for lack of vision. For many ages, but little, very little, has been done to extend the knowledge of Christ among the nations of the earth; and, of course, for many ages the limits of Christendom have received but very little extension.

Lately, however, blessed be God, the scene has been changed. Within the last eight years, Christians have been roused from their slumbers, and, looking round upon

the world, their eyes have affected their hearts. Sensible of their former criminal supineness, they have engaged in the work of spreading the gospel with singular resolution and zeal. Societies for this purpose, instituted in Europe, have displayed a spirit of disinterestedness and activity, of enterprize and fortitude, which do honour to the Christian name. Already have they sent Missionaries to the East Indies, to different parts of Africa, to the islands of the South Sea, and to other destitute regions; and they appear to be continually extending their views, and redoubling their efforts. Their zeal and exertions have provoked to emulation the friends of the Redeemer in this land. In this country several societies have been formed on the same general principle, and with the same laudable views of the Missionary Societies in Europe. These Societies, though still in their infancy, as they have already done considerable, have inspired the hope and the confidence, that, by the divine blessing, they will do much, for the spread of the gospel, and for the salvation of precious souls, ready to perish.

Of the number and description of societies now mentioned is the MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY SOCIETY. This society was instituted in 1799. At its first meeting, after its formation, May 28th of the same year, the number of its members was only thirty-eight. Small as it was, a little fund was immediately raised by the contribution of its members, and of others; and measures were adopted to carry into effective operation its benevolent design. During the first year, however, owing to providential hindrances, no missionaries were employed.

At the second annual meeting, May 23, 1801, it appeared that the number of members had increased to one hundred and nineteen,* and the fund amounted to upwards of a thousand dollars. This year four missionaries were employed; viz. the Rev. Messieurs David Avery, Jacob Cram, John Sawyer, and Adoniram Judson.

Mr. Avery was instructed to visit the new settlements in the western part of the state of New-York; and commenced his mission in the month of September. At Bern, 23 miles west of Albany, on the 17th of September he preached his first sermon. From Bern he proceeded westwardly; and, during his mission of 222 days, he visited upwards of fifty

* The present number is about 240.

different places, preached one hundred and seventy-seven sermons, and attended fifty-two conferences.

Mr. Cram, whose missionary field was also in the western counties of New-York, commenced his mission in the month of August, and preached in nearly fifty newly settled towns.

Mr. Sawyer's missionary field was in the district of Maine. He commenced his mission in the month of August; and in the course of the ten weeks, in which he was employed, preached sixty-three sermons.

Mr. Judson was sent into the interior parts of the state of Vermont, was in the Society's service about three months, and preached upwards of forty sermons.

In the course of the third year, the Society supported two summer, and two winter missions, near the western lakes; and also two summer missions, and one during the winter, in the district of Maine. The missionaries employed in the western service were the Rev. Messieurs Avery, Cram, and Alexander; those in the eastern, the Rev. Messieurs Wines and Sewall. Their respective journals, which describe the extensive fields of their labours, and mention the places where they preached, and the manner in which they employed their time, exhibit ample testimonials of their missionary qualifications. Mr. Alexander was sixteen sabbaths in the Society's employ; rode eleven hundred and thirty three miles, preached sixty-three sermons, baptized fifteen persons, attended four conferences, gathered two churches, and assisted in gathering another. Mr. Wines was employed a term including twenty-two sabbaths; preached ninety sermons, administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper twice, baptized four children, admitted eight persons into the church, and assisted in gathering two churches.

In the course of the last year, four missionaries were in the employment of the Society. The Rev. Mr. Cram traversed an extensive region in the new settlement of New-York and Pennsylvania. The Rev. Mr. Alexander laboured also in the Genesee Territory. The Rev. Messieurs Avery and Sewall were employed in the district of Maine. From their journals it appears, that they performed the service with the same fidelity, diligence, and zeal, which had been so happily displayed in former missions.

The missionary journals furnish pleasing proof, not only that the several missionaries employed by the Society have

been faithfully devoted to the great object of the institution; but also that, in general, they have been greatfully received, in the places where their services were tendered; and that, in many instances, their zealous and affectionate labours have been crowned with encouraging success.

Mr. Avery, in the journal of his first western mission, says, "In traversing this great region, I have had the satisfaction to find the people, in general, well disposed towards missionaries. They came out with cheerfulness; they heard me with patience, and with avidity; and in some places with anxiety and tears. It has been affecting to see women hasting to meeting in a dark evening, and deep mud, by the light only of a brand of fire. Infidelity, which early claimed this region, and erected its standard here, has been made to feel very powerful opposition from heaven. When the enemy came in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord has lifted up a standard against him. It has lost some champions; its crest is lowered. When reason fails of convincing infidels, the banner of the cross, accompanied with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is enough to make them tremble, and to gain their assent."

The following are extracts from the Rev. Mr. Cram's journal of 1802 & 3.

"At Great Hollow, near the Catskill mountain, state of New-York, there has been a remarkable attention to religion this year. A church has been gathered, all of whom, three excepted, have recently become professors. Three fourths of the adults now belong to the church.

"In the neighbourhood, west of Schoharrie court house, I tarried two nights. I found more attention here than in any place where I had been. They seemed remarkably ready to receive ideas, without any disposition to cavil. Several had recently obtained hopes that they were born again; one, while I was there.

"Monday, June 31, 1803, passed through New-Hartford and Utica. In both these places there have been awakenings since last spring. At Utica, beside the general conference, there is a select conference, where none but members of the church, and those who are under serious impressions, are admitted. Several hope they have lately been born again.

"Feb. 13th, I preached at Onondaga Hollow, Isaiah ix. 6. *The Prince of Peace.* The Indians here have for two

years greatly reformed of their intemperate drinking. This was effected by Cornplanter's brother, who told them he had communicated with the Great Spirit, who was offended with the Indians for their drunkenness; that it was a scheme of the white people to rob them of their lands. The impression he made was so powerful, that different tribes held several counsels on the subject, and finally agreed to leave off the intemperate use of strong liquors.

" Saturday, April 2d, I visited the Tuscorora Indians. But one of their chiefs was at home. He made a speech to me, giving me thanks for my visit, expressing his design of attending to the religion of Jesus Christ. He observed, that the white people had attended to this religion, and were prosperous, but their people had not attended, hence they were diminished; and they must now attend. He presented me with three strings of white wampum, to present to those who sent me, as a token of respect and friendship. These Indians have learned to sing psalms, in which they greatly delight. They have a Stockbridge Indian for a schoolmaster, who teaches reading, writing, and singing. In conversation the chief told me that formerly he had children. When the first was sick, some of the Indians told him, he must kill a hog, or some creature, and make a feast, or his child would die. He did so; but the child died. His other children became sick; he practised in the same way, by advice of his friends; they all died. Something seemed to speak to him, that if he did not leave off such practices, he should die himself. It is said there is not a legitimate child in the village, according to our laws, or their ancient customs.

" On the sabbath I preached. When they retired after public service they affectionately took me by the hand. Among others there was a female, who has been accounted a prophetess. She still says many things in favour of their old superstitions. About the time that Christian Missionaries first visited these pagans, and other tribes in the vicinity, there was an effort to revive their heathen superstitions. One man among the Senecas pretended to have revelations, and obtained influence with his nation; but Red-jacket opposed him, and still appears to feel the gospel important. This chief of the Tuscororas did not attend preaching when I was here in 1800. When their present missionary first came, he did not. He used to remark, that " his

mother did not attend to the gospel: she was a good woman; he did not see why he could not be good without attending to sermons." Some of those Indians are industrious, have skill in business, correct ideas of property, and are rich.

"This month I had an interview with Poudric, who has two sons and a daughter. His oldest son is 14 years of age and the next heir to the present chief Sachem. On this account he is very desirous he might receive an education at some college of the United States. He wished they both might be taken away to a distance, that they might not see the Indian settlement again for five or six years.

"April 15th, I called at capt. Brant's: he was not at home; but I soon after met him and had a friendly conversation. I delivered him a letter from the northern Missionary Society of New-York, showing the probability of their furnishing his tribe with a missionary, if he desired it. When he read in the letter somewhat of salvation by Jesus Christ, he was affected, shed tears, and said, "These are high words." I read to him an address I had received from Dr. Hopkins and Mr. Patten to Indians. He then sat down and conversed with freedom and good sense. He wished me to visit his people on Grand River, in Upper Canada, about 2000 in number; of whom 500 were white people. He supposed there was an encouraging prospect of the Indians being civilized to the westward, but that it must be a gradual work. He observed that he was a wicked man, but wished others saved, if he were lost himself."*

The following things are extracted from Rev. Mr. Alexander's journal.

"Thursday, Aug. 27, 1801, lectured at Worcester, in a school-house, from John xv. 14. The greater part of my hearers were subjects of the late revival in this place. Their minds were tender; and they expressed much joy at being favoured with missionary aid. The professors of religion in these parts appear to live in the enjoyment of God.

* The Providence of God is very noticeable in now inclining these savage tribes to hear the gospel, after having so long, and so repeatedly, rejected it. The manner of effecting it is equally surprising. They are evidently moved by motives of human policy, while the designs of God, we hope, are mercy and salvation. The Tuscorora chief observed, that "white people attended to the gospel, and were *prosperous*; that their people had not attended, and were *diminished*;" hence they must now attend.

Their hearts are overflowing with divine love; and, according to the best information, they shew in their lives and conversation that there is a difference between the clean and the unclean. They evidently separate themselves from the camp of sinners, and have no connexion with the unfruitful works of darkness, in foolish talking and jesting, in dancing, and other vain amusements.

"At New Durham, in the county of Green, is a glorious revival of religion. The work of God in the conviction and conversion of sinners began last spring to make its first appearance in this place. It has been ever since increasing and spreading in such a manner that the attention of all the inhabitants have been awakened to divine truth, and to their own guilt and danger; and many have humbled themselves at the footstool of sovereign grace. The effusions of the Holy Ghost have reached every family, and nearly every person, in the town, which is large in territory, and thickly inhabited. How animating is the prosperity of Zion in those regions, which a few years since, were the dwelling place of furious beasts and roaming savages! God can make solitary places bud and blossom, and deserts become vocal with his praise.

"Monday, Aug. 31, at Litchfield, delivered a discourse in the evening, from Psalm lxxiii. 18. After sermon and prayer, we went into a conference on the wickedness of men, their imminent danger, and the importance of immediate repentance. Some appeared to be deeply sensible of their undone situation; others shewed much solemnity and affection; and there is reason to hope we were favoured with the presence and the smiles of God.

"Tuesday, Sept. 1, rode to Paris. Sixteen years ago Paris was an uncultivated wilderness. It now contains 4726 inhabitants, four parishes, and four congregational churches. The Rev. Eliphalet Steel is pastor of the first church, and the Rev. Mr. Eastman of the fourth. In all the parishes there has been an uncommon attention to religion, deep conviction, and many hopeful conversions. The people appear to be serious, solemn, and very attentive in the time of divine worship. The meeting houses are thronged on the sabbath; and it is no uncommon thing to see two hundred persons attend a religious conference. In consequence of this general attention, the people are well indoctrinated in the principles of Christianity. Their gravity and moral-

ity are worthy the esteem and imitation of the old settlements in the New-England states.

" Friday, Oct. 30, rode to Trenton, and in the evening preached a lecture. The hearers gave good attention. There has been, the past summer, some degree of awakening and conviction in this place, and several hopeful conversions. After the lecture we went into a conference on some of the doctrines of religion, and the experiences of Christians. Several gave a very rational and comfortable account of the work of grace in their own hearts. The awakening still continues.

" Saturday, Oct. 31, rode to Steuben. In the course of the past season about fifty persons have obtained a hope in this place. The seriousness began last winter, but was not made visible until May. Conferences were set up, the sabbath was more strictly observed, and the great inquiry was, " What shall we do to be saved." According to information the work has been carried on in a regular and solemn manner. I have conversed with many of the young converts, of whom the greater part appear to have been deeply convinced of their guilt and criminality, their lost and helpless condition, and their entire dependence on the sovereign grace of God for pardon and salvation, through his Son. They appear to have lively views of their own turpitude, of the justice of the divine law, and of the glory and grace of the way of salvation through the Messiah. I find the hearts of the people tender, teachable, and thankful for my assistance. Many of the serious people date the beginning of this reformation to the missionary labours of Mr. Avery among them. They wish to be remembered among the missionary societies."

☞ *In a future number some extracts from the Journals of our other Missionaries will probably be presented.*

May 24 and 25, 1803, the Massachusetts Missionary Society held, in Boston, its fourth annual meeting. The meeting, which was large, solemn, pervaded with brotherly affection, and blessed, as we trust, with the gracious presence of the Lord, the interests of whose kingdom were consulted, was opened with prayer, by the President. Divine service was attended, in the Rev. Dr. Eckley's meeting house, on the evening of the 24th. The Rev. Mr. Austin of Worcester, who led in all the public solemnities,

delivered a very appropriate and impressive discourse, from Rom. i. 14, 15: "*I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.*" The auditory was respectable, and appeared deeply to feel the impression of the occasion: and the collection for the benevolent purposes of the Society was liberal.

The officers chosen for the present year are the Rev. Nathaniel Emmons, D. D. of Franklin, President, Rev. Samuel Austin, of Worcester, Secretary, Deacon John Simpkins, of Boston, Treasurer; the Rev. Messrs. Nathaniel Emmons, D. D. David Sanford of Medway, Daniel Hopkins of Salem, Samuel Niles of Abington, Samuel Spring of Newburyport, Samuel Austin, Jonathan Strong of Randolph, Jedediah Morse, D. D. of Charlestown, Elijah Parish of Byfield, Deacon John Simpkins, and Rev. Jacob Norton of Weymouth, Trustees. The Rev. Abiel Holmes of Cambridge was chosen the first, and the Rev. Paul Litchfield of Carlisle the second, preacher for the next anniversary. The Rev. Samuel Worcester of Salem was chosen one of the Editors of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, in the place of the Rev. Caleb Alexander, who has removed into the western part of the State of New-York.

N. B. The Missionaries appointed for the present season are, the Rev. Mr. Cram and Mr. Seth Nelson for the western region, and the Rev. Jotham Sewall for the District of Maine.

FROM THE EDINBURGH MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

THE CONVERSION OF A JEW.

Bury St. Edmund's, March 12, 1803.

THE gospel of late, in this place, has been attended with great success. Accessions to our church have been numerous, and the sweet influence of vital religion increasingly felt by us all. Among other instances is a Prussian Jew; of the name of Solomon Joseph, who has been in this kingdom upwards of thirty years, and three or four of them a resident in this town.

From the earnest and repeated intreaties of his wife, who is a serious Christian, he was induced, near twelve months ago, to hear among us the glorious gospel of God our Saviour. The subject to which our esteemed pastor (the Rev. Charles Dewhirst) was providentially directed at that time, was founded on Heb. xiii. 10,—13. After his first attendance, he began to suspect his own religion, and was influenced to pray, that "God Almighty would lead him into what was truth." From that time he omitted no opportunity of attendance. The light he gained into Christianity was rapid, especially as our beloved minister was expounding the Acts of the apostles. Hearing a discourse, in the month of January, upon the conversion of Lydia, and her public profession of Christianity,—he waited upon Mr. Dewhirst the following day, to declare what God had done for his soul, and express his desire of being baptized. The interview was pleasing and affecting; the account he gave of his conversion was simple, clear, and striking. After this he was waited upon by a number of Christian friends at different times, who were more than satisfied with the account he gave. On the first Sabbath in March he was baptized, when, before a very numerous and crowded audience, the service was conducted in the following manner: after singing, Mr. Dewhirst offered up a solemn prayer,—then delivered an introductory discourse,—after which the following questions were proposed: Solomon Joseph, as your parents were Jews, and as you were educated in the Jewish principles, what induced you to embrace the Christian faith? What are your reasons for believing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God? As you know that you are a guilty condemned sinner according to the law of Moses, how do you expect to be saved?"

To these he made very satisfactory replies, and was then baptized according to the mode used in the independent churches. Immediately after his baptism, he was unanimously admitted a member of the church; and then Mr. Dewhirst addressed him upon his public profession of Christianity,—the church of which he had become a member,—and the surrounding audience: concluding by prayer for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Through the whole of the service, which was near two hours, solemnity filled the place: and, at particular seasons, the whole congregation was much affected.

In the evening, an appropriate sermon was preached by the Rev. William Hickman of Wattisfield, from John xx. 29.

JAMAICA.

The colonial legislature of this island, by a law which passed on the 17th of December last, has prohibited unqualified preachers from teaching and performing the services of religion in assemblies of negroes. The offending preacher is to be taken into custody, and confined to hard labour one month for the first offence, and six months for every repetition of the offence.

This singular enactment, so contrary to the spirit of British jurisprudence, has, happily, to receive the sanction of his Majesty before it can be considered as a permanent law of the colony: it has, however, for the present, all the force of law. We have little doubt that his Majesty, friendly as he has uniformly shewn himself to the principles of toleration, and to the rights of conscience, will mark with his disapprobation this proceeding of the Assembly of Jamaica. When a similar law was passed about ten years ago, by the legislature of St. Vincent, his Majesty was graciously pleased to signify, that he could by no means give it his sanction.

The cruelty and injustice of the present law is considerably enhanced by the utter want of every species of religious instruction, in which the negroes of Jamaica are left by their masters. It is also well known, that the clergy of that island do not regard the negroes as a part of their spiritual charge; and that in very few of the twenty parishes into which the island is divided, is divine service performed above two or three times in the year. The negroes, therefore, are shut out from every means of religious knowledge, except such as irregular teachers may afford them; but even this resource is now cut off.

We may fairly presume, that the measure we are now considering, originated, not in any fear of danger from the disloyalty of the preachers, or from the effect of their instructions in weakening the spirit of subordination among the slaves, but from the same dislike to religion which causes so general and remarkable a neglect, and even contempt

of its ordinances, as is well known to prevail throughout the island.

The planters of Jamaica cannot be ignorant of the happy effects which the labours of *unqualified* preachers, as they are called in the act, have produced in the island of Antigua—effects which have proved of the highest benefit, not to the negro only, by the new hopes, desires, affections principles and motives, with which religion has inspired him, but to the master also, who has found the reward of his humane toleration, in the increased fidelity, loyalty, industry, and affection of his converted slave.

REPORT

OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE OF MISSIONS

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

May 21, 1803.

In this first publication from the "standing committee of missions," it may be proper for them to state, for general information, that they are, in a degree, connected with another body, called the "trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America;" who were legally incorporated by an act of the Legislature of Pennsylvania, passed March 28th, 1799. This corporation was formed for the more convenient management of the funds of the General Assembly; and have power, by their charter, to receive and hold real and personal estate for benevolent and pious purposes, and to dispose of it according to such directions as they shall receive from the General Assembly; but are obliged, in all cases of specific appropriations by the donors, to apply their donations strictly to promote the objects for which they designed them. Among the donations which the pious liberality of individuals has already furnished, are some particularly destined to the support of missions to such of the white inhabitants of our frontiers as are destitute of the stated means of grace,

and to the Indians; and to the instruction of the blacks. The persons who compose the General Assembly are very widely dispersed, and are frequently changed; they meet but once in a year, and a very great variety of objects then presses on their attention: these circumstances rendered it impracticable for them to conduct the missionary business with that deliberation, and to give it that energy, which its importance demanded, and which those who had furnished the funds had a right to expect; they therefore delivered it, at their session in 1802, as a single object of attention, to the care and management of a committee selected expressly for that purpose, which they denominated the "Standing Committee of Missions."—This committee is chosen annually by the Assembly, and consists of four clergymen and three laymen (resident in and near the City of Philadelphia,) whose duty it is, amongst other things, to collect, during the recess of the Assembly, all the information in their power relative to the concerns of missions and missionaries, to digest it, and report thereon at each meeting of the Assembly:—to designate the places where, and specify the periods during which the missionaries should be employed;—to correspond with them, if necessary, and with any other persons, on missionary business:—to nominate missionaries to the Assembly, and report the number which the funds will permit to be employed;—to hear the reports of missionaries; make a statement thereon, and report to the Assembly relative to the diligence, fidelity and success of the missionaries;—to engage a suitable person annually to preach a missionary sermon;—to assist in the distribution of religious and moral tracts; and to superintend the missionary business generally, under the direction of the Assembly.

In the execution of their duty this committee have begun an extensive correspondence, from which they hope to derive much useful information, and great encouragement to exertion in the important work they have undertaken: and although their labours were much interrupted by the pestilence which attacked the city of Philadelphia last year, such arrangements have been made, and such services performed, as they flatter themselves will tend greatly to promote the design of their institution.

The reports of the missionaries of the year past, exhibit to the committee satisfactory evidence of their fidelity

and diligence; and their is great reason to hope that their labours have not been in vain; throughout all their routes their appears to have been an eager desire to hear the gospel preached, the hearers have been generally attentive, in some places great solemnity was observable, in many instances deep convictions appeared to have taken hold on the consciences of sinners, and the pious have been edified and comforted:—a few cases have occurred, in which the word was accompanied with so much power as to bring even the infidel to the foot of the cross, and convert the deist to the faith of Christ.

So numerous are the demands for missionary services, that it is not in the power of the committee to supply them:—both men and money are wanting: it is, however, expected that measures taken by the Assembly, in their late session, will furnish a better supply of both for the future, as they have pointedly applied to Presbyteries for missionaries, and no anticipation of funds is hereafter to be permitted to enfeeble the exertions of any future year: the committee also hope for additions to the *capital* which produces an important part of the annual supplies.

The following are the arrangements for the current year:

The Rev. Jedediah Chapman will continue to act as stated missionary, agreeably to the contract heretofore made with him:

The Rev. William Arthur is employed between Northumberland and Tioga point in Pennsylvania:

The Rev. John Lindsley, in the counties of Cayuga, Onondago, Oneiada and Steuben, in the state of New-York.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Read, on the Peninsula between Delaware and Chesapeak bays, and the ocean.

Mr. Stewart Williamson, from the mouth of Whelen Creek, in the Territory North West of the Ohio, across the Muskingum, Hockhockin and Scioto, to the Miami.

It was not before this year that a suitable person offered as a missionary to the *Indians;* but the committee have now been able to avail themselves of the labours of the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, whom they have engaged in a mission to the Cherokees: they wish not to be improperly sanguine, but Mr. Blackburn's acquaintance with those Indians, (in whose vicinity he resides) his apparent qualifications for the work, and the cordiality with which he has undertaken

it, furnish, as they think, a good foundation whereon to build a strong hope of success.

He has in charge immediately to attempt the establishment of a school, on the border of the Indian territory, for the education of the Aborigines.

Mr. John Chavis has been employed, for two years past, as a missionary to the blacks in Virginia and North Carolina: he is a black man, who has had a liberal education, and has been regularly introduced into the ministry. His diligence and prudence have been commendable, and he has not been unsuccessful. Local circumstances, of peculiar delicacy, have prevented his audiences from being as numerous as were to have been wished, and although generally countenanced and treated with respect, in a single instance he met with personal opposition; but there are places in which more correct ideas of the design of his mission prevail, and in which the committee apprehend he may be useful: they have therefore employed him again, and confined his services to Mechlenburgh county in Virginia, and to Person, Granville, Wake, and Chatham counties in North Carolina.

Besides the above the committee have engaged the Rev. Ebenezer Grant to visit the congregations of Williams township and Genesee, in the county of Ontario in the state of New-York; and are authorised to send missionaries to the city of Washington, and to Norfolk in Virginia should they be furnished with sufficient means.

The standing committee of missions, as appointed by the General Assembly, for the present year, consists of

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Blair, of Germantown,
The Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, of Philadelphia,
The Rev. Philip Milledoler, of do.
The Rev. Jacob J. Janeway, of do.
Elias Boudinot, Esq. LLD. of do.
Mr. Robert Smith, of do.
Ebenezer Hazard, Esq. of do.

Of whom the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green was chosen *Chairman*, and the Rev. Jacob J. Janeway, *Secretary*: to either of whom applications respecting missionary business may be made.

(To be continued.)